



3. Developing very detailed long range plans took a lot of time and energy on someone's part. With limited resources at their disposal, the SWCD board did not feel the time involved in developing a plan was worth it given the outcome.
4. The format of the plan was too cumbersome. No one really understood how it all fit together or what purpose it served at the local SWCD level.

The action plan format outlined in this section is designed to be a very simple, concise, useable, working document tailored to meet the needs of the individual SWCD. It has components of both long range and annual planning. The annual planning component can be reviewed at a monthly district board meeting in a matter of minutes. The long range component is short, clear, and to the point. This makes it a very simple and effective tool that takes much less time to create. Anyone can understand and use the completed plan, even with very limited knowledge of a particular SWCD.

## Moving Toward a Goal

Does this happen at your district board meeting: A supervisor(s) comes up with a great idea for a district project. Everyone agrees it is a good idea, but it never gets past that point. Two months later same thing, different idea, and so it goes. Why does this happen?

One reason could be that the project seems too big: "Our district could never get that done." "Who will do all the work? We all have real jobs, and bills to pay." If the board were to just sit down and really plan out such a project piece by piece they may find that it can be done, or at least they could begin to explore the possibilities. No one says it has to be done in one year or even two. Even if it takes a few years to complete, doing a little work every year, at least it gets done. Just like when you have a bunch of tasks to accomplish at work or at home, if you think about all of it at once it seems like it's too much. However, if you make a list and do one or two things a day it doesn't seem that bad. In the end it gets done because you made a plan. Same thing!



Action plans can be used to guide the most active or well-funded SWCD toward that next big project, or it can be used by the most inactive or under-funded SWCD to figure out how to put their limited resources to the best use. Even if your district only comes up with one or two goals, and achieves them, at least you did something. The key is that the district supervisors and staff understand the power and purpose of making a plan and seeing it through. Every SWCD supervisor and employee should have the opportunity to contribute their ideas to the plan. While all may not

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contribute, at least the opportunity was given. Once goals are agreed upon and written down, the SWCD supervisors and staff have made a commitment as a group to achieve those goals.

At this point many districts make a big mistake: They never hold themselves accountable. The plan, and the commitments in it, are never seriously considered again. Once again the plan must be USED to be effective. This can be as simple as reviewing the projected dates of completion for upcoming actions at a regular board meeting.

The entire action plan is simple enough to be edited quite easily. Since this is a working document, changes can and should be incorporated throughout the year. Actions can be added, revised or deleted completely. This applies to annual planning elements as well as long range elements.

I hope you will give the action planning process a try. I have seen it work. It really can be a great tool to motivate and focus your local SWCD.

## Keys to Action Planning

In this section I will comment on each area of the action plan, and provide additional resources for plan development. Each section is labeled long range or annual plan to reflect which time frame it covers. Long range is typically 5yrs. Annual plan is a 1 year period (generally a fiscal year). Also remember that this is a working document. It can be changed to meet the changing needs of the district.

Organization (*long range*): This is taken directly from the Soil and Water District Act.

Function (*long range*): This is a generally accepted definition of the function of a district. Many boards change this to fit their view point

We Serve (*long range*): Who exactly does this board serve (e.g. landowners, land users, tax payers)? A district cannot meet the needs of all people. Clearly identify what portion of the potential audience is to be served.

Why (*long range*): Why do you serve this portion of the populace of the district? What is the SWCD serving them with?

Mission Statement (*long range*): See Mission Statement Formation Worksheet

Critical Natural/Material Resource Issues (*long range*): This section identifies the natural resource issues that are of concern in the district. Since most districts do not have the ability to address every issue of concern, it often helps to prioritize the list according to

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need. This allows the board to focus the limited resources of the district on the most critical needs first.

- In doing this section the board may discover critical materiel needs that the district itself has. These things can be equipment, personnel, buildings, etc. Often these needs must be met in order for the district to have the capacity to address the critical natural resource issues identified. List those here if they apply.

Critical Geographic Areas (*long range*): Within the district there may be a particular area or areas that a natural resource issue occurs. This section gives you the opportunity to identify those areas. It helps to tie each geographical area to a particular critical natural resource issue. This will help later in the development of statements of intent and annual planning. It will assist in focusing district resources on areas and issues that need to be addressed.

Statements of Intent (*long range*): This section establishes on the ground long range goals for the district. The statements should be concrete and realistic. At the same time they should be challenging enough to inspire and require focus from the board to complete.

Prioritize these statements. This will help to focus resources more efficiently in the annual planning section. It is better for a board to establish one goal and complete it well than to come up with a bunch of pie in the sky goals that will never be achieved. If an inactive or unfocused board can complete just one project, no matter how small, it will make them hungry for more success.

Ideally, statements of intent are based on the critical natural resource concerns which have already been agreed upon. A goal to conserve water or reduce erosion is hard to argue against, whereas a goal which promotes one group or point of view over another (to save family farms, for example) could be controversial. If the outcome is focused on benefits to the resource, then widespread support is more possible.

This section is where all participants in the planning process really need to believe in, and buy into, the goals established. Without that buy-in, without a real desire by the participants to see these goals realized, there is no need to go on to the annual planning step. This is where the big picture is developed. The board must have a clear view of the big picture; otherwise they will not follow through on the annual planning goals.

Priority Actions for the Next 12 months (*annual planning*): This is where the rubber meets the road. Using each statement of intent, develop a plan for the fiscal year to get closer to achieving the statements goal. If you prioritized the statements of intent in the previous section, more effort should be directed towards the highest priority statements. Some statements may only have one or two items, some may have none. No problem. The key is to make progress towards the long range goals. It may take several years to even address a goal because the board is using its



limited resources to accomplish the highest priority statements. It is better to accomplish one goal well than to be overwhelmed trying to accomplish them all, and end up accomplishing none.

Staffing Needs: Will the board need staff to accomplish the above goals? If so how many people, with what kind of skills? Does the district have an employee policy and job description? You will need those documents prior to hiring staff.

Annual Budget Needs: Will your current budget support your goals? If not, how can you make it work? Volunteers, cooperation with other groups or agencies, grants?

Key individuals, Groups, or Agencies to Reach for Program success: Who do you need to work with to achieve the districts goals?

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## Attachments

Action Planning Template

Attachment 1-1

Action Planning Example

Attachment 1-2

Mission Statement Example

Attachment 1-3

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# **Soil & Water Conservation District** **Action Plan**

**Organization:** A governmental subdivision of the state of New Mexico organized under state law (Chapter 73, Article 20).

**Function:** To take available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land user.

**We Serve:**

**Why:**

**Mission Statement:**

**Critical Natural Resource Issues:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

**Critical Geographic Areas:**

**Statements of Intent (outcome) for the natural resource issues:**

*Example - (by June of 2008 the East Torrance SWCD will reduce water consumption in the Estancia Valley by 20%)*



**Staffing Needs:**

**Annual Budget Needs:**

Salaries & Benefits:

Equipment:

Office Supplies:

Programs & Cost Share:

Rent & Utilities:

Other:

Total Annual Budget:

**Key individuals, groups, or agencies to reach for program success:**

**DRAFT**  
**New Mexico**  
**Soil & Water Conservation District**  
**Action Plan**

- Organization:** A governmental subdivision of the state of New Mexico organized under state law (Chapter 73, Article 20).
- Function:** To take available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land user.
- We Serve:** The citizens of the New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation District.
- Why:** To provide and promote stewardship of the natural resources within the New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation District.
- Mission Statement:** The New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation District promotes stewardship of natural resources by providing leadership, education, technical and financial assistance to the citizens of the district.

### **Critical Natural Resource Issues:**

1. Watershed Health
2. Water Conservation
3. Aquifer Protection
4. Rangeland Health
5. Noxious/Invasive Weeds
6. Urban Growth

### **Critical Geographic Areas:**

Watershed Health = Manzano Mountains (Tajique & Torreon watersheds)

Water Conservation = Estancia Basin

Aquifer Protection = Estancia Basin

Rangeland Health = East of Highway 41

Noxious/Invasive Weeds = District wide

Urban Growth = Northwest portion of the district

**Statements of Intent (outcome) for the natural resource issues:**

***Example - (by June of 02 the New Mexico SWCD will reduce water consumption in the Estancia Valley by 20%)***

1. By June of 2007 the New Mexico SWCD will control 10,000 acres of juniper infested land.
2. By June of 2007 the New Mexico SWCD will return the perennial flow of the Torreon and Tajique creeks.
3. By June of 2007 the New Mexico SWCD will reduce irrigation water use by 20% through information, education, voluntary metering, and improved irrigation efficiency.
4. By June of 2005 the New Mexico SWCD will establish a monitoring program to measure water quality and quantity.
5. By June 2004 the New Mexico SWCD will work with cooperators to eliminate Russian Knapweed along Hwy 41.
6. By June of 2007 the New Mexico SWCD will strive to eradicate the noxious weeds within the district.
7. By June of 2002 the New Mexico SWCD will establish a partnership with the Torrance County Planning and Zoning Commission to implement a conservation plan consistent with district goals.

**Priority Actions for the next 12 months:**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>DATE COMP</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Acquire and distribute all available information on juniper control/invasion. <i>(resource concern 1)</i>		Dec 02		
Board members and employees will become fully educated on juniper encroachment and control . <i>(resource concern 1)</i>		Aug 02		
Build partnerships with USFS, BLM, State Land Office, State Forestry, and establish MOUs as needed. <i>(resource concern 1)</i>		Jun 03		
I.D. funding opportunities for watershed health . <i>(resource concern 1)</i>		Jun 03		
Spend up to 50% of district cost share funds on juniper control. <i>(resource concern 1)</i>		Jun 03		
I.D. juniper infested areas of the district. <i>(resource concern 1)</i>		Aug 02		
Do education outreach programs in the Tajique and Torreon watersheds. <i>(resource concerns 1, 2)</i>		Jun 03		
I.D. groups/agencies working on water issues in the Estancia Basin, and statewide. <i>(resource concerns 3, 4)</i>		??????		
Sponsor an information education event on water conservation. <i>(resource concern 3)</i>		Mar 20, 02		

Develop a water monitoring program. <i>(resource concern 4)</i>		Dec 02		
I.D. cooperators along Hwy 41. <i>(resource concern 5)</i>		Mar 03		
Do a mass mailing of noxious weed brochures. <i>(resource concern 5)</i>		Mar 03		
Establish a partnership with the Torrance County Planning and Zoning Commission to implement a conservation plan consistent with district goals. <i>(resource concern 6)</i>		Jun 02		

**Staffing Needs:**

1 Part time District Manager  
1 Part time Project Manager

**Annual Budget Needs:**

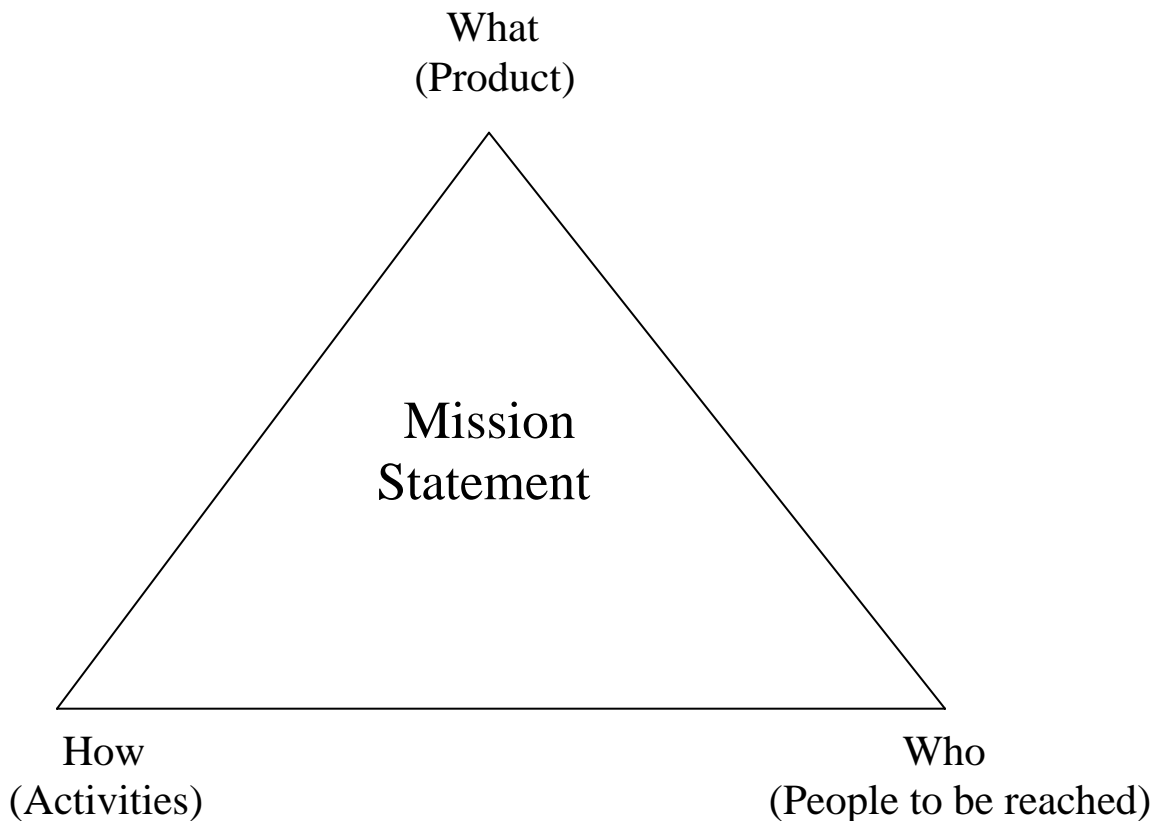
Salaries & Benefits: \$30,000  
Equipment: \$5,000  
Office Supplies: \$2,000  
Programs & Cost Share:  
Rent & Utilities:  
Other: \$1,000  
Total Annual Budget: \$40,000

**Key individuals, groups, or agencies to reach for program success:**

County Commissioners  
County Manager  
State Legislators  
State Engineers Office  
Army Corps  
NMDA  
NMED  
EPA  
NRCS  
USFWS

## Mission Statement Formation Worksheet

1. A mission statement should provide a clear indication of what the district is, and what it is doing or should be doing.
2. Ask the following questions when formulating a mission statement:
  - a) **What:** What are we currently doing? However, look to what might be, not just what is currently happening. What product or service does the district deliver or want to deliver?
  - b) **Who:** The district cannot meet the needs of all people. Mission requires a clear identification of what portion of the potential audience (public) is to be targeted.
  - c) **How:** How will the mission be accomplished? What is the conduit for delivering the product(s) or service(s) that the district provides?



## **Mission Statements**

**Should** define who you are, whom you serve and how you serve them.

**Should** be clear enough to serve as a test of every action made by the district at any time.

**Should** be short, no more than two sentences. If it is too long, people cannot remember it.

**Should** be a brief answer to the question, “Well, what exactly does the Soil and Water Conservation District do?”

## **Sample Mission Statements**

The Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District provides leadership and administers programs to help people wisely use, conserve, consistently improve, and perpetually sustain our natural resources and physical environment.

The mission of the Washington Soil and Water Conservation District is to protect, restore, enhance, and promote the wise use of natural resources. This will be achieved through development of projects, education of the public, the cooperation of landowners/users, agencies and other political subdivisions of the state.

The Martin Soil and Water Conservation District promotes stewardship of natural resources by providing leadership, education, technical and financial assistance to the citizens of the district.

The Fredrick Soil and Water Conservation District serves the land and the people of the district in order to enhance the health and productivity of the land. This is done by coordinating and implementing measures to obtain maximum on the ground conservation benefits.